

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,
As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Specifically - when a campaign add states what a candidates has said (i.e. Kerry said that Iraq was better off under Saddam Hussein...), I feel it is important that the public be informed of the whole quote, which gives an entirely different meaning. Also, all of these remarks about who voted for or against what is completely misleading, since the specific bills are not mentioned nor what else was in those bills. Unfortunately most people do not take the time (or have the time) to keep up with the various bills, and don't understand that missing one vote on a bill doesn't mean the same thing as not voting for the bill at all. I would like to see a portion of broadcast news deal with specifics on bills and what votes mean.

I do not feel we have a government elected by an informed electorate, but one driven by emotional sound bites.

Sincerely,

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